



Early Years' Foundation Stage Policy

Approved by:		Date: March 2026
Last reviewed on:	March 2026	
Next review due by:	March 2029	

Early Years Foundation Stage

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception year. At Harrington Hill, we offer provision for 4 to 5 year olds in Reception class. In partnership with families, we support every child in making a positive start to their educational journey. We provide quality teaching and learning opportunities and environments that nourish each child's unique abilities and interests as they learn and grow.

This policy has been informed by the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (DfE, 2025). The policy is divided into four sections:

- Key Principles of the EYFS
- Observation and Assessment
- Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements
- Transition to KS1

Section 1: Key Principles of the EYFS

The EYFS is based upon four principles, as detailed in the Statutory Framework for the EYFS (DfE, 2025):

- Every child is a **unique child**, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured
- Children learn to be strong and independent through **positive relationships**
- Children learn and develop well in **enabling environments with teaching and support from adults**, who respond to their individual interests and needs and help them to build their learning over time
- Children **develop and learn at different rates**

A Unique Child

At Harrington Hill, we recognise that each child is a competent learner with the ability to make valuable contributions to the classroom. We support children to develop a positive sense of their own culture and identity. We value and respect all children and families equally. Harrington Hill understands that children learn and develop in different ways at different rates. Practitioners observe and understand each child's development and learning, assess progress, plan for and act upon identified next steps.

Positive Relationships

Practitioners at Harrington Hill understand that positive relationships foster a sense of belonging to the school community, which benefits wellbeing and supports teaching and learning. Teaching staff respond to children's individual needs, feelings and interests with sensitivity. We are supportive of children's efforts and independence and use praise, encouragement, celebration and reward to help children develop a positive attitude towards learning. Staff are consistent in setting clear boundaries and expectations towards a classroom culture that helps all children to feel safe, calm and ready to learn.

We recognise that parents and carers are children's first and most enduring educators and we value their continued contributions. Parents are encouraged to develop a partnership with Harrington Hill in the following ways:

- Before starting school, families are visited at home and children have the opportunity to attend transition sessions in school
- Parents and carers are invited to a key information sharing meeting in the half-term before their child starts school
- Workshops are held throughout the year to support parents and carers to effectively help their child in their learning
- Parents and carers are invited into school for celebratory events and assemblies
- Parents and carers are invited to join their children for trips and events outside of school
- Children's school experiences are shared with parents and carers via the Tapestry app
- Teachers speak warmly to parents and carers and encourage an 'open door' approach to communication and questions

Enabling Environments

Harrington Hill EYFS offers stimulating spaces and resources, both inside and outside. Resources are diligently maintained and organised. As well as a classroom for Reception, The Early Years benefits from two additional "Shared Space" classrooms, which are used as a sensory space and for breakout interventions. Children in the EYFS access weekly Forest School sessions all year round, which offers children opportunities for supported risk taking and physical and emotional exploration in nature.

Throughout the day, children have opportunities to access whole class activities, adult-led small group learning, independent directed activities and self-selected play and learning. Learning in the EYFS is largely play based, rooted in stimulating, physical resources that children can manipulate and experience first-hand. Provision is carefully planned to stimulate and engage children's interests, and offer children opportunities for both success and challenge. Both the indoor and outdoor environments reflect the breadth of the curriculum.

Learning and Development

Harrington Hill designs the EYFS curriculum in line with the Statutory Framework for the EYFS (DfE, 2025) and the non-statutory guidance, the Development Matters framework (DfE, 2023).

The seven areas of the EYFS curriculum are organised into two categories: prime and specific.

Prime Areas:

- Communication and Language
- Physical Development
- Personal Social and Emotional Development

The prime areas are universal, fundamental aspects of child development. All three prime areas are always in action; it is through the prime areas that children access the world around them and relationships with people – which in turn unlocks the specific areas. Harrington Hill understands that children's brains develop fast in the first five years than at any other time of life. The prime areas remain centrally relevant throughout Key Stages 1 and 2, but developmental steps missed in the early years become progressively more difficult to address – this understanding is reflected in EYFS provision at Harrington Hill.

Specific Areas:

- Maths
- Literacy
- Understanding the World
- Expressive Arts and Design

The specific areas represent shared cultural skills and knowledge; which children engage with as members of the society in which they live. The specific areas are not time-sensitive to in terms of the brain's biological responsiveness to experiences. Aspects of these areas will arise for children naturally as they make sense of the experiences of daily life. Other aspects are taught explicitly through planned activities as part of the EYFS curriculum offer.

At Harrington Hill, the EYFS curriculum has been specifically designed to equip children with the necessary skills, knowledge and understanding they need to sufficiently prepare them for KS1 and beyond. Staff training ensures that all teaching staff in all year groups have a clear understanding of how learning accumulates and progresses from Reception through to Year 6.

At Harrington Hill, we support children in developing the three Characteristics of Effective Learning as detailed in the Statutory Framework for the EYFS (DfE, 2025).

These are:

- **Playing and Exploring:** children investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'
- **Active Learning:** children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements
- **Creating and Thinking Critically:** children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things

Planning

We plan an exciting and challenging curriculum based on our observation of children's needs, interests, and stages of development across the seven areas of learning to enable the children to achieve and exceed the early learning goals. In order to do this, staff working with the youngest children are expected to focus strongly on the 3 prime areas. Staff also take into account the individual needs, interests and stage of development of each child in their care, and use this information to plan challenging, enjoyable and meaningful first-hand experiences in which children explore, think creatively and are active. We aim to develop and foster positive attitudes towards learning, confidence, communication and physical development. The balance will shift towards a more equal focus on all areas of learning as the children move through the Early Years at Harrington Hill and grow in confidence and ability within the three prime areas.

In planning and guiding children's activities, we reflect as practitioners on the different ways that children learn and reflect these in our practice. Where a child may have a special educational need or disability, staff along with the SENCO consider whether specialist support is required, linking with relevant services from other agencies, where appropriate. Staff write medium term plans, informed by the EYFS framework 2025, which focus on a series of core topics. These plans are reviewed by the EYFS Lead to ensure the planned provision offers experiences in all seven key areas. These plans then inform our short-term weekly planning, alongside our observations, which remains flexible for unplanned circumstances and to follow children's current interests. Children have whole group and small group times that increase as they progress through the EYFS. This

includes daily communication, literacy and language sessions, daily mathematics, and daily phonics sessions (using 'Read, Write Inc.'). We plan a balance between children having time and space to engage in their own child-initiated activities and those that are planned by the adults. During children's play, early years practitioners interact to stretch and challenge children's learning and up level vocabulary at any given opportunity. We create a stimulating environment to encourage children to free-flow between inside and outside areas.

Each area of learning and development is implemented through planned, purposeful play, and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activities. Staff respond to each child's emerging needs and interests, guiding their development through warm, positive interaction. As children grow older, and as their development allows, the balance gradually shifts towards more adult-led activities to help children prepare for more formal learning, in readiness for year 1.

Section 2: Observation and Assessment

Rationale

Harrington Hill understands that the cycle of effective observation, assessment, planning and provision begins with building strong and secure relationships with children. A holistic view of the child - including their individual skills, knowledge, understanding, interests, triggers and motivations - enables practitioners to tailor teaching and learning to successfully move children forward in their learning journey. We appreciate that children's progress is not always linear, but rather like a spider's web in its nature.

Assessment plays an important role in effective approaches to supporting children. Harrington Hill understands assessment to be the process of knowing about an individual child's skills, knowledge and understanding through collecting and using information about what they can do. Effective assessment highlights gaps in children's understanding and calls attention to the children who needs the most support. This enables practitioners to offer timely and appropriate intervention in order to narrow learning gaps. Assessment is also used to inform a rich and meaningful curriculum for all children.

Formative Assessment

Ongoing formative assessment is central to good Early Years practice. It involves practitioners observing and interacting with children in their play and learning. Observation is the practice of watching and listening to children to find out how they are developing, what they are learning through their play and how they interact with others. Reflections and professional conversations around what has been observed contributes to practitioner knowledge of a child.

Floor books

At Harrington Hill, observations of children's experiences and learning are recorded through a collaborative math's and curriculum floor book. In mathematics, they serve as a dynamic assessment tool by capturing "maths talk," problem-solving processes, and children's evolving ideas through a mix of photographs, transcribed quotes, and work samples. Floor books provide a holistic view of how children engage with the curriculum:

- **Capturing the "Voice of the Child":** adults scribe children's questions, predictions, and explanations as they solve mathematical problems, providing evidence of higher-order thinking.
- **Evidence of Progression:** By dating entries, photographs, and drawings, we can track how a group's understanding of concepts like number or shape develops over time.

- **Formative Planning:** The books record the "consultation process," where children's interests and questions directly inform future maths activities and lesson planning.
- **Moderation and Reflection:** staff use floor books to back up their professional judgements during assessment moderation, showing evidence of independent effort rather than just completed worksheets.

Summative Assessment

Harrington Hill EYFS recognises that, alongside day-to-day interactions with children, reliable summative assessment helps practitioners to gain a clear understanding of what children can and cannot yet do, and if they have achieved intended learning outcomes.

Children are assessed in phonics every half-term. This information is used to group the children, meaning children access appropriate teaching and learning that is targeted to their current attainment in reading.

In the first term of Reception, practitioners use the Verbo **online speech and language toolkit** to screen children's communication and language skills. This practitioner-led screening informs our understanding of children's attainment and identifies specific areas of need, such as sentence structure, vocabulary, or social skills.

If appropriate, targeted children then follow a **personalised intervention programme** designed by Speech and Language Therapists. This includes:

- **Targeted Interventions:** Small group or individual sessions using Verbo's library of video-modelled resources.
- **Goal Tracking:** Specific, automatically generated targets that are monitored through the platform to ensure progress.
- **Home-School Links:** The ability to share specific targets and video activities with families to support language development at home.

Statutory Assessments

There are two statutory assessment points in Reception.

Reception Baseline Assessment

The Reception Baseline Assessment is carried out within the first six weeks of pupils starting Reception. The RBA is a short, activity-based assessment of pupils' starting points in:

- language, communication and literacy
- mathematics

Pupils use practical resources to complete these tasks and teachers record the results on a tablet. It is not used to label or track individual pupils therefore no numerical score is shared. However, the assessment produces a short, narrative statement that explains how pupils performed. These are used to inform teaching within the first term.

The Early Years Foundation Stage Profile

The EYFS Profile is a statutory summative assessment of children's development at the end of Reception. It is completed in the final term of the year in which the child turns 5. It is an assessment of the child's outcomes in relation to the 17 early learning goals (ELGs). Practitioners use their

professional judgement to make these assessments, based on their knowledge and understanding of what the child knows, understands, and can do. Final judgements are informed by a range of perspectives, predominantly those of teaching staff, but also taking into account contributions from the child, parents/carers and other relevant adults.

Children are defined as having reached a Good Level of Development (GLD) at the end of the EYFS if they have achieved the expected level for the ELGs in the prime areas of learning and the specific areas of mathematics and literacy. This helps teachers and parents to understand broadly what a child can do in relation to national expectations. The main purpose of the EYFSP assessment is to support a successful transition to Key Stage 1 by informing the professional dialogue between EYFS and Year 1 teachers.

Section 3: Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

At Harrington Hill, all children are valued as unique individuals. All children are supported to access the full curriculum and make good progress, with reasonable adjustments and individualised planning made where necessary. Professional communication between families, teaching staff, the school SENCO and other professionals ensure that any child with potential Special Educational Needs (SEN) is identified at the earliest possible opportunity. Early identification of SEN is crucial to enable staff to best support the development of each child. Appropriate steps are taken in accordance with the school's policy for SEN.

We meet the needs of all children through:

- planning opportunities that build upon and extend children's knowledge, experience and interests, and develop their self-esteem and confidence
- using a wide range of teaching strategies based on children's learning needs
- providing a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children and to help them to learn effectively
- providing a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued
- using resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping
- planning challenging activities for children whose ability and understanding are in advance of their language and communication skills
- monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide support as necessary

Welfare

Harrington Hill recognises its statutory obligations to keep children safe. We aim to protect the physical and psychological well-being of all children. We understand that children learn best when they are healthy, safe and secure, when their individual needs are met and when they have positive relationships with the adults caring for them. We aim to educate children on boundaries, rules and limits and to help them understand why they exist. We provide children with choices to help them develop this important life skill. Children should be allowed to take risks, but need to be taught how to recognise and avoid hazards.

Early years specific safeguarding and welfare procedures

As set out in the Early years foundation stage statutory framework (Sept 2025).

- Whilst children are eating, there is always a member of staff who has a valid paediatric first aid certificate

- Calpol is stored on site and will only be administered with written consent from a parent or carer, in cases where a guardian is unable to attend promptly and the child has a very high temperature or is experiencing significant pain.
- On occasions, mobile phone cameras may be used to take children's photographs. These photos are shown to the line manager, downloaded to the system and then deleted.
- At times, staff may need to provide intimate care for a child. During enrolment, parents are asked to give permission for this to happen.
- We understand that positive personal care routines for children and young people are crucial for developing independence, promoting good health and hygiene, and building emotional well-being. An adult with whom the child is familiar always carries out intimate personal care. Training supports all EYFS staff to ensure this is a positive experience for the child.
- Manage behaviour effectively in a manner appropriate for the children's stage of development and individual needs
- Ensure that the premises, furniture and equipment is safe and suitable for purpose
- Maintain records, policies and procedures required for safe efficient management of the setting and to meet the needs of the children

Equal Opportunities

All members of the school are treated with respect for their individual identity. We do not discriminate on account of gender, ethnicity, culture, religion, language, sexual orientation, age, special educational needs, disability and social circumstances. The curriculum is designed to reflect cultural diversity and the need to prepare pupils for life in a diverse and multi-faith society.

Health and Safety

At Harrington Hill, there are clear procedures for assessing risk, including procedures for keeping children safe during outings and for any aspects of the environment or provision that may require a further risk assessment. Please see the safeguarding and child protection policy for further detail.

In line with the Statutory Framework for the EYFS (DfE, 2025), we ensure:

- a whole school medical needs policy outlines the systems in place for obtaining, storing and administering children's medication and first aid
- a first aid box is accessible at all times and a record of accidents and injuries is kept
- designated members of staff have up to date paediatric first aid training
- a whole school health and safety policy outlines the systems in place for identifying, reporting and dealing with accidents, hazards and faulty equipment
- a whole school fire and emergency policy outlines the systems for evacuation
- fresh drinking water is available at all times
- the school kitchen offers healthy and sustainable daily meals
- fresh fruit is provided every day
- children's dietary needs are recorded and acted upon

Section 4: Parents and carers as partners

We recognise that children learn and develop well when there is a strong partnership between staff and parents and/or carers. We strive to create and maintain partnership with parents and carers as we recognise that together, we can have a significant impact on a child's learning. We welcome, actively encourage and support parents to participate in their child's education and care in numerous ways. Through regular meetings with parents, trips, workshops and targeted support for families, we build strong working relationship with families. We run parent workshops on phonics, numeracy and early writing in order to equip parents with the information they need to support their children at home. Parents and/or carers are kept up to date with their child's progress and development through the weekly 'EYFS Newsletter' and through having quick updates at the beginning or end of day as needed. In the autumn and spring terms, parents are invited to attend a parents evening. Parents receive an annual end of academic year report in addition to the termly information.

Partnership with Parents & Home Learning

We recognise that parents are a child's first and most enduring educators. To foster an effective partnership, we provide a **Weekly Learning Newsletter** designed to make the curriculum transparent and accessible. This serves to:

- **Bridge the Vocabulary Gap:** By sharing **Key Vocabulary** and a '**Book and Song of the Week**', we ensure families can model and reinforce the same language used in the classroom.
- **Consolidate Core Skills:** Weekly links to **Maths and Phonics** learning allow parents to support specific, current classroom objectives, such as mastering new phonemes or subitising.
- **Promote Purposeful Play:** We provide suggested '**Activities to Try at Home**' that are low-pressure and play-based, encouraging families to engage with their child's development in a meaningful context.
- **Celebrate Learning Journeys:** Through the inclusion of **photographs of children's play**, we offer parents a window into the 'Characteristics of Effective Learning' and the value of independent exploration

Working with Outside Agencies Working with other services and organisations is integral to our practice in order to meet the needs of all children. At times, we may need to share information with other professionals to provide the best support possible. We draw on our links with the community to enrich children's experiences by taking them on outings and inviting members of the community into our setting.

Section 5: Transition to Reception and KS1

During the final term in Reception, the EYFS Profile is completed for each child. The Profile provides parents and carers, staff and teachers with a well-rounded picture of a child's knowledge, understanding and abilities, their progress against expected levels, and their readiness for Year 1. The Profile is informed by on-going observation and professional judgements by the class teacher and TAs, discussions with parents and carers, and any other adults whom the teacher, parent or carer judges can offer a useful contribution. This informs the dialogue between Reception and Year 1 teachers about each child's stage of development and learning needs and assists with the planning of activities in Year 1. In the final term in Reception, the Year 1 teachers will meet with the Early Years staff and discuss each child's development against the Early Learning Goals in order to support a smooth transition to Year 1. This discussion helps the Year 1 teacher to plan an effective, responsive and appropriate curriculum that will meet the needs of all children.

Here at Harrington Hill transitions are carefully planned for and time given to ensure continuity of learning. At any transition, we acknowledge the child's needs and establish effective partnerships with those involved with the child and other settings, including nurseries and childminders.

Children attend introductory sessions to Reception to develop familiarity with the setting and practitioners. Parents are fully involved in this process. Initial meetings with parents and home visits allow them to share information about their child's individual needs and preferences. This information is used to plan for children's induction into the new setting. Throughout the settling in period parents are kept informed about how their child is doing and consulted on what adjustments could be made if the child has particular needs.